



Office of the Director of  
**Telecommunications  
Regulation**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Regulator Opens Way to Full Mobile Number Portability**

Etain Doyle, Telecoms Regulator, today (15<sup>th</sup> May 2001) issued a consultation paper describing how mobile number portability will operate in Ireland in future. Mobile number portability could be available in Ireland from mid 2002 and will allow customers retain their entire number when changing to a new operator. This is particularly valuable for business customers, who are now more reliant on their mobile numbers. Such customers avoid the risk of missed calls and save the costs of a number change when they move operators.

According to the Regulator “The introduction of a relatively straightforward procedure for changing mobile operator while retaining your existing number will enhance competition by enabling the dissatisfied mobile customer transfer with ease to their mobile operator of choice.”

The proposed new process will allow a customer to take their number to the new mobile operator simply by making a phone call to that operator, with no need to physically visit any particular outlet. The Irish procedure is relatively straightforward in comparison to other European countries where mobile portability has been hindered by the cumbersome procedures needed to implement it.

She continued “The proposed procedure will bypass the usual stumbling blocks to the practical uptake of mobile portability. This solution simplifies the process for the operators

concerned and especially for the mobile customer. Equally important is that it will help resolve our long term difficulties with number shortages.”

Ireland currently has a limited system of number portability, which served the country well in the past but can now no longer cope with the huge mobile growth and the entry of new operators into the market. That system, which allows customers to move between operators by changing the network prefix of their phone numbers (i.e. the 08X part), suffers from delays in implementation and can be especially problematical for pre-pay customers. The replacement system, which should be in operation in the second half of next year, is designed to be rapid and simple and will allow the whole telephone number to be retained during changeover.

The Regulator is very keen to have as wide a response as possible to this consultation. Responses from consumers, who are the most directly affected parties, or their representative bodies, are especially invited.

The consultation will run from 15<sup>th</sup> May 2001 to the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2001. The Director of Telecommunications Regulation welcomes comments from interested parties, in particular, consumers and their representative organisations. The full consultation paper is available on the ODTR website [www.odtr.ie](http://www.odtr.ie) “ 01/36 Implementing Full Mobile Number Portability in Ireland – Consultation Paper.”

**ENDS**

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**Editor Notes:**

In January 2001, the Telecoms Regulator announced that she would introduce Full Mobile Number Portability (FMNP) (Decision Notice D1/01). Today’s consultation outlines a proposed framework on how Full Mobile Number Portability will be implemented. An

accompanying document prepared by the International Telecoms Consultants OVUM, goes into greater technical detail about practical aspects of the proposed approach, and this should be useful to the operators.